



Council of the District of Columbia

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**Testimony of
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**District of Columbia
State Board of Education Meeting On Workforce Readiness**

**April 27, 2011
John A. Wilson Building
Room 412**

Good Evening, President Trabue and members of the State Board of Education. My name is Kilin Boardman-Schroyer and I am the Legislative Director for Councilmember Michael A. Brown, who as you know, is the Chairman of the Council's Committee on Housing and Workforce Development.

First let me thank you for inviting me to testify today on the critical issue of Workforce Readiness and for acknowledging the importance of linking the activities, policies, and strategies of education and workforce development programs. While it is evident to most that the state of our city's workforce readiness is inextricably linked to our city's education system, it has been a challenge over the last several years in getting our City agencies to reflect this relationship.

In today's economy, education, job training and job placement must be key priorities for governments of all sizes. Our local leaders in the District of Columbia must be focused on getting our residents back to work with jobs that not only will help them become self-sufficient but also will lead to a strong and sustainable recovery for our economy. Over the last several years our local, national, and global economy has fallen prey to the worst recession since the Great Depression. While the recession certainly cannot be attributed to any one single factor, the government of the District of Columbia largely has failed to respond in a way that adequately mitigates the effects of the recession. As a result many District residents are now faced with stark economic and employment realities.

Unemployment has experienced large fluctuations peaking at over 12% and currently holding steady at above 9% which is more than 50% higher than the unemployment rate at the beginning of the recession. Poverty and demand for safety-net supports have also

business community in discussions around their workforce needs and DOES's latest labor market analysis report used data from before the recession which is clearly outdated and no longer accurate in terms of the job market in the District.

Again, we have already begun to see major changes in this area and we are awaiting the release of an updated DOES Labor Market Analysis which will be key to informing our policy and funding decisions.

Outcome Focused Planning and Budgeting

A final area of needed improvement that I would like to highlight tonight is focusing on better outcome measurements. For too long we have funded programs while requiring very few metrics to measure their effectiveness. While the DOL required outcome measurements our local metrics were more focused on outputs such as how many people enrolled and graduated from specific programs rather than asking whether their graduates were able to get and retain jobs that paid self-sustaining wages. Of course it is important to note that these measures must acknowledge the differences in the challenges that residents face and therefore must measure on a value-added approach. As we move forward we must make sure a central theme in our funding decisions is the outcomes of different programs.

We are happy to report that this approach has also been fully adopted by this Administration and we are well aware that both OSSE and DOES have already begun laying the framework to implement these measures.

With the changes that have already taken place and those that are currently in the works we are very optimistic that in the near future these issues will be addressed and our workforce development system will have turned the corner and will be a highly effective system for DC residents. However, we plan to continue to work with the Executive agencies to ensure this happens and plan to provide continuous oversight as we move forward. To this end we are planning a joint public roundtable in mid to late June with the COW to review the Executive's progress in these areas and their plans for the future.

I thank you again for the opportunity to testify and would be happy to answer any questions you might have.